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AUTHOR Lett, Nancy J.; Kamphaus, Randy W.
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ABSTRACT

Results of the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC) Student Observation Scale (SOS), a measure of classroom behavior, were correlated with results of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale (TRS). Two classroom observations were made of each of 30 students (21 males and 9 females) aged 5 to 11 years. Teachers of those students completed the TRS. Correlations were computed by comparing scales on the TRS with the SOS scales. Selected TRS items were also compared to SOS scales. The stability of the SOS was determined by correlating the two observations with each other. Eleven of the 14 TRS subscales were validated by low to moderate correlations with SOS subscales. Furthermore, all of the selected TRS items correlated significantly with the SOS Adaptive and Maladaptive Totals. These results provide a stringent test of the validity of the TRS. Three tables present study data, and 36 references are included. (Author/SLD)

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Validation of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale by the BASC Student Observation Scale

Nancy J. Lett and Randy W. Kamphaus

University of Georgia

Running head: VALIDATION OF THE BASC TRS

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Abstract

In a study of the criterion related validity of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale (TRS), results of the BASC Student Observation Scale (SOS), a measure of classroom behavior, were correlated with results of the TRS. Two classroom observations of each of 30 students ages 6 to 11 were performed. Teachers of those students completed the TRS. Correlations were computed comparing scales on the TRS with the SOS scales. Selected TRS items were also compared to SOS scales. Stability of the SOS was determined by correlating the two observations with each other. Eleven of the fourteen TRS subscales were validated by low to moderate correlations with SOS subscales. Furthermore, all of the selected TRS items correlated significantly with the SOS Adaptive and Maladaptive Totals. These results provide a stringent test of the validity of the TRS.

Validation of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale by the BASC Student Observation Scale

Objectively measuring children's behavior in the classroom has consistently been a problem in school psychology. Behavior varies across settings, tasks, and caregivers, and psychologists will observe few behavior problems during testing in the clinic or school setting (Barkley, 1987; Barkley, 1990; Glutting & McDermott, 1988). The most popular method of behavioral assessment is currently the behavior rating scale to be completed by parents or teachers. Rating scales are an integral part of the diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Behavior Disorder, and Oppositional Defiant Disorder among others. Rating scales are time-efficient, inexpensive, and require little specialized training on the part of the rater (Martin, 1988) (Mayes, 1987). Data can be gathered on infrequently occurring behaviors which may not be seen during a classroom observation, and raters with much experience with the child can supply important information (Barkley, 1990). Rating scales with excellent psychometric properties are available (Barkley, 1987; Barkley, 1990).

There are, however, some problems with this type of measure. Rater bias involving over-reporting or under-reporting behaviors, halo effects, rater misunderstanding of questions on the scale, and dependency on the accurate memory of the rater are some of

the disadvantages of the behavior rating scale (Barkley, 1987; Mayes, 1987; Platzman, Stoy, Brown, Coles, Smith, and Falek, in press). Other problems include subjectivity, differences in tolerance for particular behaviors, differences in raters' experience with children, and rater bias (Mayes,1987; Madle, Neisworth, & Kurtz, 1980; Klein & Gittelman-Klein, 1974; Klein & Gittelman-Klein, 1975). Some studies have found a decrease in reporting of behavior problems over time when the same child is rated more than once by the same rater (Neisworth, Kurtz, Jones, & Madle, 1974; Glow, Glow, & Rump, 1982; Milich, Roberts, Loney, & Caputo, 1980). This finding may be the result of regression to the mean (Milich et al., 1980).

Because of problems inherent in the use of behavior rating scales, other objective measures should be used to validate and supplement these results. A classroom observation utilizing momentary time-sampling is one method of validation. Advantages of direct observation include observation of behavior in the natural environment (Barkley, 1987), objectivity, the use of operationally defined behavioral categories, little or no regression to the mean, and less likelihood of rater bias (Mayes, 1987). Studies of various direct observation systems have demonstrated high interobserver reliabilities. Percentage of agreement between scorers is usually above 80% and is typically greater than 90% (Tindal & Parker, 1987; Horn, Conners, Wells, & Shaw, 1986; Schworm and Birnbaum, 1989; Bailey, Bender, & Montgomery, 1983; Rapport, DuPaul, Stoner & Jones, 1986; Eaton,

Enns & Presse, 1987; Steinkamp, 1980; Rapport, Jones, DuPaul, Kelly, Gardner, Tucker & Shea, 1987).

There are, however, disadvantages to the use of classroom observation. It is expensive and time consuming. Furthermore, because behavior varies over situations, the observation may not be representative of the child's typical activities, (Abikoff, Gittelman-Klein & Klein, 1977; Mayes, 1987). Classroom observation techniques may not be sensitive to events such as aggression which occur infrequently but are highly salient (Atkins & Pelham, 1991). In addition, reactivity or observer effects may be a problem. The presence of observers in the classroom may elicit atypical behavior on the part of some children (Barkley, 1990). This phenomenon may be more of a problem with hyperactive children. In a study by Abikoff et al (1977) teachers indicated that during classroom observations, 43.7% of the hyperactive children exhibited behavior that was not representative of their usual behavior, whereas only 13.8% of the comparison group exhibited atypical behavior. However, Abikoff et al. (1977) observed each child on five different occasions and found no significant differences between the first observations and the last. Dubey, Kent, O'Leary, Broderick, and O'Leary (1977) also found no evidence of observer effects during classroom observations.

Normative data is not available for classroom observation scales, and if collected, it may not be valid across different classroom situations (Barkley, 1987; Barkley, 1990; Mayes, 1987;

Zentall, 1980). Remedies for this problem have been suggested by Barkley (1987; 1990). Collection of local normative data or use of yoked controls during each observation may "provide an indication of deviance."

The purpose of the current study was to assess the validity of a new teacher rating scale by correlating the results of the Student Observation Scale, a component of the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC) (Reynolds & Kamphaus, in press), with the BASC Teacher Rating Scale. Historically, the correlation between teacher rating scales and objective measures has been in the low to moderate range (Kazdin, Esveldt-Dawson & Loar, 1983; Blunden, Spring & Greenberg, 1974; Barkley & Ullman, 1975; Victor, Halverson, Inoff & Buczkowski, 1973; Atkins, Pelham & Licht, 1985; Milich & Fitzgerald, 1985; Brown, 1982; Horn, et al., 1986; Bailey et al., 1983; Eaton et al., 1987). Variables such as subjectivity and halo effects on rating scales, and for direct observation, insensitivity to qualitative differences in behavior (Abikoff & Gittelman, 1985), variability of behavior over settings, and insensitivity to low rate, highly salient behaviors may be some of the reasons for low to moderate correlations. However, important clinical information can result from divergent data (Barkley, 1990; Gordon, DiNiro, Mettelman & Tallmadge, 1989). Most researchers point out the importance of collecting both teacher ratings and classroom observations during child assessment (Barkley, 1990; Campbell, 1985; Douglas, 1990). Knowing the amount of correlation to expect between these

measures and the reasons for possible disparity will assist the clinician in assessment and diagnosis.

Specifically, this study assessed the following questions.

1. Do the subscales of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale (TRS) exhibit a low to moderate correlation with the subscales of the Student Observation Scale (SOS) as would be predicted from previous research?

2. Are some subscales of the TRS more highly correlated with the SOS scores than others?

3. Do the Adaptive and Maladaptive totals of the BASC SOS exhibit low to moderate correlations with the TRS subscales?

4. Do selected items from the BASC TRS correlate with SOS Adaptive, Maladaptive, and selected subscale scores?

5. Does the BASC SOS show adequate stability over a one to eight week period?

Method

Subjects. Thirty children between the ages of 5 and 11 who had been referred for psychoeducational assessment as a result of school problems or as a re-evaluation of their special education placement were the subjects of this study. The children were from several counties in Northeast Georgia and had been referred to a university-based clinic or to their local school district for evaluation. Referral questions included Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disability, Behavior Disorder, and Mild Mental Retardation.

The sample consisted of 21 boys and 9 girls who ranged in age from 5 to 11 with a mean age of 8. With regard to race, 20 of the children were white and 10 were African-American. Intelligence scores ranged from 62 to 118 with a mean of 88 (sd=14).

Instruments. The Student Observation Scale (SOS) is part of the BASC (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992), a system of behavioral assessment which includes a number of components. In addition to the Student Observation Scale, the BASC includes Teacher Rating Scales, Parent Rating Scales, a Parent Personality Profile, a Self-report of Personality, and a Structured Developmental History (parent interview) (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992).

The Student Observation Scale utilizes a 15 minute momentary time-sampling technique. Every thirty seconds during the momentary time-sampling component, the observer watches the child's behavior for 3 seconds. At the end of the 3 seconds, the behaviors are recorded by placing check marks in the appropriate behavioral categories. Space is provided for comments on specific behaviors observed. Twenty-seven seconds are allowed for recording of behaviors. This is a relatively long period of time and allows even novice observers to complete the observation easily and accurately. Categories were developed empirically by asking teachers and school psychologists to list behaviors seen in the classroom and by factor analyzing results of observations. The SOS categories include Responding to Teacher/Lesson, Peer Interaction (appropriate), Working on School Subjects, Transition

Movement (appropriate), Disruptive Movement, Inappropriate Vocalization, Somatization, Repetitive Motor Movements, Aggression, Self-Injurious Behavior, Inappropriate Sexual Behavior, and Bowel/Bladder Problems. These categories fall into two domains, Adaptive Behavior and Maladaptive Behavior.

The BASC Teacher Rating Scale (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992) for children ages 6 through 11 was also utilized. The Teacher Rating Scale consists of 148 questions about children's behavior to which the teacher responds "never," "sometimes," "often," or "almost always." Subscales derived from the Teacher Rating Scale are Hyperactive/Impulsive, Aggression, Conduct Problems, Anxiety, Depression, Withdrawal, Somatization, Attention Problems, Learning Problems, Atypical Psychotic, Adaptability, Social Skills, Leadership, and Study Skills. The BASC manual (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992) reports a concurrent validity study correlating the BASC TRS with the Burks' Behavior Rating Scales. Validity coefficients for similar scales ranged from .81 to .86. For example, BASC TRS Anxiety correlated .85 with the Burks' Excessive Anxiety; BASC TRS Attention Problems correlated .86 with Burks' Poor Attention; and the correlation between BASC TRS Hyperactive/Impulsive and Burks' Poor Impulse Control was .84.

Observers. Seven graduate students in a School Psychology program were the observers. The SOS is designed to be used by observers with a limited amount of training, therefore, the graduate students were trained in the use of the Student

Observation Scale by one of the authors in a 30 minute training session.

Procedure. Each child was observed in his or her classroom during a structured period of the day, and behaviors were recorded on the BASC Student Observation Scale. Two observations were made for each child. The second observation was completed within 8 weeks of the first in order to investigate whether or not differences between scores on the SOS and the TRS were due to problems with stability of the SOS. A copy of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale was left with the teacher who completed the form and mailed it to the authors of the study.

Data analysis. Pearson correlation coefficients were used as estimates of the relationship between TRS and SOS subscales and items. Intraclass correlation coefficients were used to assess test-retest reliability of the SOS.

Results

TRS Subscales correlated with SOS Adaptive & Maladaptive Totals. Correlation coefficients comparing the first 15 minute SOS Adaptive Behavior Totals and the Maladaptive Behavior Totals with each TRS subscale showed low to moderate correlations between seven of the comparisons (See Table 1). The TRS Conduct Problems subscale correlated .66 with the Maladaptive SOS Total and -.59 with the Adaptive SOS Total. Similarly, TRS Aggression and SOS Maladaptive Behavior showed a .52 correlation. TRS Depression correlated .46 with SOS Maladaptive Behavior and -.42 with Adaptive Behavior.

A unique feature of the BASC TRS is its inclusion of 4 adaptive behavior subscales: Adaptability, Social Skills, Leadership, and Study Skills. The results of data analysis for this study showed a .55 correlation between the TRS Adaptability subscale and the SOS Adaptive Behavior Total. Small sample size may have been the reason that correlations between SOS Adaptive Behavior and other TRS Adaptive subscales did not reach significance. The correlation between TRS Adaptability and SOS Maladaptive Behavior was -.58.

Insert Table 1 about here

TRS Subscales Correlated With SOS Subscales. Table 1 also shows correlations between TRS and SOS subscales. Nineteen of the correlations were statistically significant (alpha <.05). The SOS Disruptive Movement subscale produced the largest correlations with TRS subscales. SOS Disruptive Movement correlated .66 with TRS Aggression, .53 with TRS Conduct Problems, and .44 with TRS Impulsivity. Additionally, Disruptive Movement showed a -.55 correlation with TRS Adaptability.

SOS Inappropriate Vocalization correlated .60 with TRS Aggression and .53 with TRS Conduct Problems. An examination of the TRS Aggression subscale items shows that many of the items relate to verbal aggression: Argues when denied own way;

Threatens to hurt others; Blames others; Talks back to teachers; Orders others around; Calls other children names; etc.

Surprisingly, SOS Inattention did not show a significant correlation with TRS Attention Problems. SOS Inattention did, however, correlate .48 with TRS Withdrawal, and .43 with Learning Problems. SOS Inattention correlated negatively with the TRS Adaptive Subscales: -.44 with Social Skills, -.49 with Leadership, and -.55 with Study Skills.

TRS Items Correlated With SOS. TRS items that had clear counterparts on the SOS were analyzed separately to assess their criterion related validity. Results of TRS items such as: Reads assigned chapters; Is easily distracted from class work; Talks too loud; and Doesn't pay attention, were correlated with SOS totals and with selected subscales. All of the selected TRS items correlated significantly with the first 15 minute SOS Adaptive and Maladaptive Totals. Correlations from -.38 to -.55 were found between 8 TRS items describing problem behaviors and the SOS Adaptive Behavior Totals. Correlations between the selected items and the SOS Maladaptive Behavior Composite ranged from .38 to .49 and are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Test-Retest Reliability. Test-retest reliability over a one to eight week period was calculated for the SOS Adaptive and Maladaptive Behavior scores by comparing the first 15 minute observation with the second 15 minute observation. The reliability coefficient for the SOS Adaptive Behavior score was .44, and the reliability for the SOS Maladaptive Behavior score was .46.

Intraclass correlation coefficients were computed comparing the individual SOS subscales for each 15 minute observation. Disruptive Movement (r=.62), Inappropriate Vocalization (r=.43), and Repetitive Motor Movement (r=.75) exhibited adequate test-retest reliability over an eight week period (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 about here

Discussion

The current study lends some support to the validity of the BASC Teacher Rating Scale (TRS) for children ages 6-11. Eleven of the fourteen TRS subscales were validated by low to moderate correlations with subscales from the BASC Student Observation Scale which utilizes a 15 minute momentary time sampling procedure during a classroom observation. Among the best validated TRS subscales were: TRS Hyperactivity which was supported by its correlation with SOS Disruptive Movement; TRS Aggression which correlated with SOS Disruptive Movement and Inappropriate Vocalization; TRS Conduct Problems which exhibited

a negative correlation with SOS Responds to Teacher and positive correlations with Disruptive Movement and Inappropriate Vocalization; and TRS Adapatability which was supported by a positive correlation with the SOS Adaptability total and a negative correlation with the SOS Maladaptive total. In general, the TRS problem behaviors correlated negatively with the SOS Adaptive total and positively the SOS Maladaptive total. Similarly, the TRS adaptive subscales were supported by positive correlations with the SOS Adaptive total.

Surprisingly, the SOS was not able the validate the TRS Attention Problems scale. This may be related the the fact that SOS Inattention scale exhibited low test-retest reliability. Inattention may be difficult to observe objectively in the classroom. The early form of the BASC SOS that was used in this study defined inattention as "daydreaming" and observer comments indicated that many of them scored this category when the child was looking around or staring into space. The current version of the BASC SOS defines Inattention as "staring blankly/daydreaming; doodling; looking around; looking at hands; and fiddling with objects/ fingers." Hopefully, this definition will aid observers in recording this category more reliably.

Internalizing scales of the TRS were the most poorly validated. Teachers, however, may not be so sensitive to these types of behaviors. Similarly, observers may not be able to "observe" the cognitions associated with these problems.

Another problem with the results were the test-retest reliability data. Although we did not expect extremely high correlations due to the fact that observations were collected during different classroom activities from one observation to the next, we were rather disappointed by correlations in the 40's for the Adaptive and Maladaptive totals. The second observations were performed by first year graduate students who were trained in the use of the SOS, but who seemed to have more difficulty in correctly coding behavior than the advanced graduate students who performed the first observation. Their inexperience with standardized testing procedures may have hurt the accuracy of their data collection. Another study of the test-retest reliability of the SOS is recommended.

In general, however, these results support the validity of the BASC TRS. To a certain degree, we can see indications of the behaviors that teachers report on teacher rating scales when we go into the classroom for an observation. Of course it goes without saying that the use of classroom observations augment the information provided by teachers in rating scales by giving us a first-hand look at behavior in the classroom environment. Rating scale problems with reporter bias, halo effects, and dependence on the memory of the rater are overcome with classroom observation using momentary time-sampling. Direct observations will likely never replace teacher rating scales, and the results of the current study indicate that a differential diagnosis is not clearly indicated by results of the SOS. However, the SOS

does support the TRS and supplies additional information while compensating for problems inherent in rating scales.

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Requests for reprints should be sent to Nancy J. Lett, Department of Educational Psychology, 325 Aderhold Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

Table 1

Correlation of TRS with SOS Subscales and Totals

	Student Observation Scale (SOS)								TOTALS	
TRS	Respon to Teacher	Peer Inter-action	Work on School	Trans. Move.	Disrupt. Move.	Inattention	Inapp. Vocal.	Repet. Motor Move.	Adap. Total	Mal. Total
Hyperactivity	-.04	.44*	-.07	.19	.44*	-.23	.22	-.08	.05	.20
Agression	-.28	.24	-.03	-.04	.66**	-.11	.60**	-.14	-.35	.52**
Conduct. Prob.	-.37*	.26	-.14	-.01	.53**	.11	.51**	.16	-.59*	.66**
Anxiety	-.37*	.03	.24	-.20	.21	.03	.33	.16	-.20	.34
Depression	-.43*	.07	.09	-.09	.27	.18	.46*	.03	-.42*	.46*
Withdrawal	.05	-.19	-.14	-.26	-.02	.48**	-.02	.21	-.33	.34
Somatization	-.03	-.16	.01	-.24	-.08	.30	-.24	.28	-.18	.15
Attention Prob.	.24	.16	-.22	.05	-.01	.16	-.22	.08	-.03	.04
Learning Prob.	.18	-.07	-.07	-.20	-.43*	.43*	-.29	.26	-.01	-.03
Atypical Psy.	.16	.23	-.29	-.04	.23	.08	.15	.10	-.21	.29
Adaptability	.11	-.21	.38*	-.15	-.55**	-.30	-.29	.09	.55*	-.58**
Social Skills	-.14	-.13	.47*	-.25	-.07	-.44*	.03	.19	.36	-.19
Leadership	-.15	.24	.29	.03	.14	-.49**	.22	.22	.31	.00
Study Skills	-.11	.05	.22	-.01	.20	-.55**	.38	.03	.20	-.04

Note- * alpha <.05

** alpha <.01

Table 2

Correlation of Selected TRS Items with SOS Total Scores

	Adaptive Total	Maladaptive Total
Reads assigned chapters.	-.38*	.45*
Is easily distracted from classwork.	-.55*	.40*
Talks too loud.	-.49*	.44*
Doesn't pay attention.	-.51**	.40*
Taps foot or pencil.	-.55**	.40*
Has short attention span.	-.47**	.38*
Calls out in class.	-.49*	.48**
Interrupts others when speaking.	-.54**	.49**
Listens attentively.	-.48**	.34
Listens to directions.	-.47**	.34

Note- * alpha <.05
** alpha <.01

Table 3

Subscale Test-Retest Reliability

	Intraclass Correlation Coefficients
Respond to Teacher	-.06
Peer Interaction	.28
Work On School	.10
Transition Movement	.26
Disruptive Movement	.76
Inattention	.25
Inappropriate Vocalization	.59
Repetitive Motor Movement	.74